

REMARKS

This application has been carefully reviewed in light of the Office Action dated February 26, 2004. Claims 1 and 3 to 21 are in the application, with Claim 1 being the sole independent claim. Claim 2 has been cancelled without prejudice to or disclaimer of the subject matter presented therein; Claims 1 and 3 to 6 have been amended; and Claims 7 to 21 have been newly-added. Reconsideration and further examination are respectfully requested.

The specification has been amended to attend to formal matters.

Claims 1 and 3 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) over U.S. Patent No. 4,808,808 (Karasaki); Claims 1 and 2 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 102(e) over U.S. Publication No. 2001/0045989 A1 (Onuki); Claim 4 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Karasaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,181,378 (Horie); Claim 5 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Karasaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,624,890 (Komiya); and Claim 6 was rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) over Karasaki in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,108,036 (Harada). The rejections are respectfully traversed.

According to one feature of the invention, the light blocking unit is removable from an optical path of the image pickup optical unit.

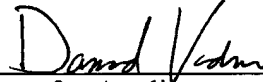
Karasaki, Onuki, Horie, Komiya, and Harada, either singly or in combination, are not seen to teach or suggest at least the foregoing feature.

Applicants therefore conclude that the applied documents do not teach or suggest the claimed invention, and it is respectfully requested that the Section 102 and 103 rejections be withdrawn.

No other matters being raised, the entire application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and such action is courteously solicited.

Applicant's undersigned attorney may be reached in our Washington, D.C. office by telephone at (202) 530-1010. All correspondence should continue to be directed to our below-listed address.

Respectfully submitted,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read "Damond Vadnais", is written over a horizontal line.

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